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Front Matter

Elephant Editors

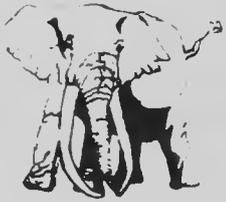
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Ahmed remains the symbol...*

This representation of the legendary Ahmed was drawn by O'Neill Ratigan. The drawing was inspired from slides of Ahmed taken at Marsabit, North Kenya, by Jeheskel (Hezy) Shoshani in June of 1973 and incorporated with other reference material.

*Why was Ahmed (and no other elephant) chosen for the cover?

Ahmed, Kenya's most celebrated elephant, was and still is regarded as a national monument. In his time, he had the largest tusks of any known elephant. Each one of his tusks weighed about 148 lbs., approximately 67 kilograms. (Average tusk weight is about 70 lbs. and 100 lbs. is considered large). A world-wide protest to save Ahmed's life was ignited by a report that two American hunters were after his huge ivory. This protest included more than 5,000 letters and cards delivered to the East African Wild Life Society. Thereafter, Ahmed was totally protected from human harrassment:

- 1) by the mere fact that he was in a protected park - Marsabit.
- 2) by a Decree from the president of Kenya, Mzee Jomo Kenyata.
- 3) by daily monitoring his movements - a task performed by two askaris (soldiers).
- 4) by "the close proximity of two younger bulls = elephant askaris."

This last statement is a thought or perhaps a legend rather than an observation.

In the Presidential Decree, Jomo Kenyata described Ahmed as "...this individual animal which captures the imagination and concern of all mankind." It was further stated in the Decree that "...under no circumstances may be (Ahmed) hunted or harrassed by anyone."

Early in 1974 Ahmed died at about 55 years old (average lifespan is equal to that of man). The death was "natural", i.e., he was not the victim of the murderous "Ivory Rush" as it was initially feared. Presently, Ahmed is preserved in the National Museum of Nairobi, Kenya - the great elephant remains the symbol of conservation for this and future generations.

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